

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day



Burns breakfast in Ardstraw

Last Saturday, 1st February, Ardstraw Parish Church Hall was the venue for Northern Ireland's only 'Burns Breakfast' and culture morning.

The event – which was a fundraiser event for the Parish Church – drew a large crowd of all ages, who travelled from across the community and from as far away as Cookstown and Donegal.



The proceedings opened with a welcome from the Deacon Assistant of the Ardstraw Parish, Rev Sean McClafferty, after which he said the Selkirk Grace.

A hearty Ulster Fry – with haggis – was served to the ravenous assembly, followed by an outstanding performance by professional actor Andrew Tinney of a drama recounting the story of Robbie Burns' life and loves, which provoked much laughter. This was followed by a display by a local school of Highland dancers and the event concluded with the traditional address to the Haggis, followed by the sound of the pipes led by Kyle Duddy.

Rev McClafferty paid tribute to Ardstraw's very active select vestry and organising committee who were out in force to ensure the breakfast was a resounding success.



Corkies at CIYD Annual Youth Forum

The Youth Forum took place in Dromantine Retreat Centre again this January and us "Corkies" got to meet an old friend, Bishop Adrian

Wilkinson, who was one of the guest speakers on Sat morning.

The Bishop spoke on life being like a square, with each side representing Friends, Focus, Fulfilment, and Faith, with very interesting points made.

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We also had the return of the amazing Susie Mapledorm, who has unlimited energy and charisma - Teaching us on lots of life and school lessons and providing us with little "lunch boxes" with the focus on listening, seeing, empathy, relationship building and learning.

Ben Jones, from Missional Generation, was around too, videoing and capturing the whole weekend.

Bishop Pat came along on Sun to close our few days.

Love this weekend and love the conversations that come out of it on the journey home!

Bishop of Edinburgh announces retirement date

The Right Rev Dr John Armes has announced that he will retire as Bishop of Edinburgh on 31 August this year.

Bishop John, who was consecrated as 26th Bishop of Edinburgh in May 2012, will reach his 70th birthday later this year. Confirming his retirement in a letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Edinburgh, he said: “By then I shall be in my fourteenth year as your bishop, a period of ministry which, for me, has been full of joy and a sense of huge privilege.”



**ROYAL IRISH
REGIMENT BAND**

VE DAY 80

ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

ALL SAINTS' CLOONEY CHURCH
SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 7PM

He continued: “I shall, of course, continue to hold the diocese in prayer as collectively you discern who God may be calling to be your next bishop. I shall do all I can to ensure that the transition is a smooth one – this will include keeping out of the way when necessary!

“In the meantime, please pray for Clare and me and our family at this time of personal transition. After 46 years of full-time ministry there will be a lot to get used to. Please pray also for the Dean and Standing Committee and others who will have particular responsibilities in the electoral process.”

Prior to his election as Bishop in 2012, he was Rector of St John’s, Princes Street, Edinburgh and Dean of the Diocese of Edinburgh. He arrived in Edinburgh in 1998 after spending time as Area Dean of Rossendale and Priest in Charge of Goodshaw and Crawshawbooth in the Diocese of Manchester.

Education

Cross Border Peace Proms

Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland – Peace Proms 2025

Congratulations to Karina Arnold of Belfast High School who successfully completed 4 performances at the RDS Simmonscourt Arena on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 February with the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland with a further 4



performances scheduled this weekend at the University of Limerick.

The Orchestra's conductor is internationally acclaimed Maestro Greg Beardsell and the Peace Proms 2025 programme is an epic and thrilling celebration of youth, live music, and sheer talent, with everything from rocking vocal and violin solos, to majestic Bagpipe and Uilleann pipe melodies, to powerful pop and peace anthems.

Banbridge Principal's son signs for Tottenham Hotspur

The principal of Banbridge High School says she is "incredibly proud" after her son signed his first professional football contract, with Tottenham Hotspur.



George Feeney (pictured with mum and dad) put pen to paper for the north London Premier League club on his recent 17th birthday. He's now being tipped as a star of the future, for Spurs – and Northern Ireland.

Mum, Katy Feeney, told Chronicle Sport: "We are all so incredibly proud of George and the journey he is on. Signing your first professional contract with a team like Tottenham Hotspur on your 17th birthday really is what dreams are made of."

And Mrs Feeney added: "As his mum, it is not the development in his football ability that I am more impressed and proud of, it's the lovely, polite and considerate young

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man he is becoming, even if he is a little bit too energetic at times!"

Full story in this week's Banbridge Chronicle



St. Brigid's Day 🌸 Lá Fhéile Bríde 🌼

'Brigid' by artist & SEN teacher Maria Crean Acidstarz Art
Created Summer 2023. Artwork located at St. Brigid's Boys
National School, Howth Road, Killester, Dublin 5.



Dublin Canvas and Dublin City Council

Making a difference in social care

In social care, your career journey doesn't just stop at the first step - it's filled with opportunities for growth and career progression!

Vincent's story is a perfect example of the incredible career path that's possible in this field. From starting out in social care to now taking on leadership roles, Vincent has experienced first-hand the impact of hard work, dedication, and the ongoing support of the sector.

Want to learn more about how you can progress in your own social care journey? Vincent's story offers great insight.

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Read his full story here >>> <https://niscc.info/a-journey-to-remember-a-story-about-career-progression-in-social-care/>

Belfast High School AS Music



Belfast High's Year 13 music class recently enjoyed a rehearsal-style evening, singing through the AS Music Sacred Set Works. The evening was kindly organised by Grosvenor Chorale and the pupils found it very beneficial.

Cathedral Calls

Candlemas Procession in Christ Church Cathedral



The season of Christmas and Epiphany drew to a close on Sunday (February 2) and was marked in Christ Church Cathedral with a beautiful Candlemas Procession.

Celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson and sung by the Cathedral Choir the liturgy for the service was in two parts. A candle lit vigil was kept recalling in readings and music the journey of the holy family to the temple courts of Jerusalem, culminating with the singing of the Candlemas Gospel.

Lighting the candles.

The service concluded with a procession in which the congregation's lighted candles were a sign of the promised Christ, our light and our salvation. The congregation guided

by the vergers joined the procession around the cathedral, ending with the clergy in the baptistery.

Candlemas is a feast which draws together a number of themes: presentation, purification, meeting, and light for the world. It is however, bittersweet. The presentation of Jesus in the Temple, greeted by Simeon and Anna, calls for rejoicing. But the prophetic words of Simeon, look towards the passion and Easter.

Christian Aid Ireland's appreciation of the Belfast Cathedral Sitout

We are hugely grateful to the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde and all the canons and clergy of the Belfast Cathedral of Saint Anne whose Black Santa sit-out this year raised an amazing £200,000.

We went along to the cathedral on Sunday for the annual Good Samaritan service when more than 100 local charities received their share of the total sum. We were delighted to be awarded £20,000.

A portion of the money we received has been ring-fenced to support our humanitarian response in Gaza, with the rest supporting our long-term development projects in countries such as Honduras and Zimbabwe.

Special guest at the service was Lady Mary Peters, who won pentathlon gold at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.



Lady Mary is pictured with Sarah Leeman (left), our Partnerships and Philanthropy Manager and Rev Paul Maxwell who sits on our Board.

Besides Dean Forde and his team, we also want to thank everyone who donated so generously to this year's appeal. Thank you all for your incredible kindness.

Clergy and ministry

Braniel Community Church 'Speak Jesus' in church and school

Braniel Community Church recently held their 'Speak Jesus' Prayer Service and also partnered with SU to start a new group in Braniel Primary.

The Prayer Service on Sunday morning 2 February took place the day after St Brigid's Day. Brigid is the saint that their hall is named after.

St Brigid was known for praying for the sick so during the morning service BCC leader Revd James Crockett left space for healing prayer. James' sermon had looked at Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals.

"Four people came forward," said James. "One person said that the pain in his cracked ribs had disappeared and another with pain in their foot felt electricity running through them as we prayed."

Last week also marked a new phase in BCC's engagement with local schools as they began a Scripture Union group with P3 and P4 children in Braniel Primary School. This is a partnership with SUNI and Braniel Methodist and 29 children came along – a great start and a wonderful privilege to 'Speak Jesus' in the school setting.

Pictured above: James Crockett, Neil Curren (Pioneer Leader Braniel Church), Jenny Moore and Lawren Wallace (Braniel PS) and in the foreground Jax McCallum (SUNI).

What is Speak Jesus?

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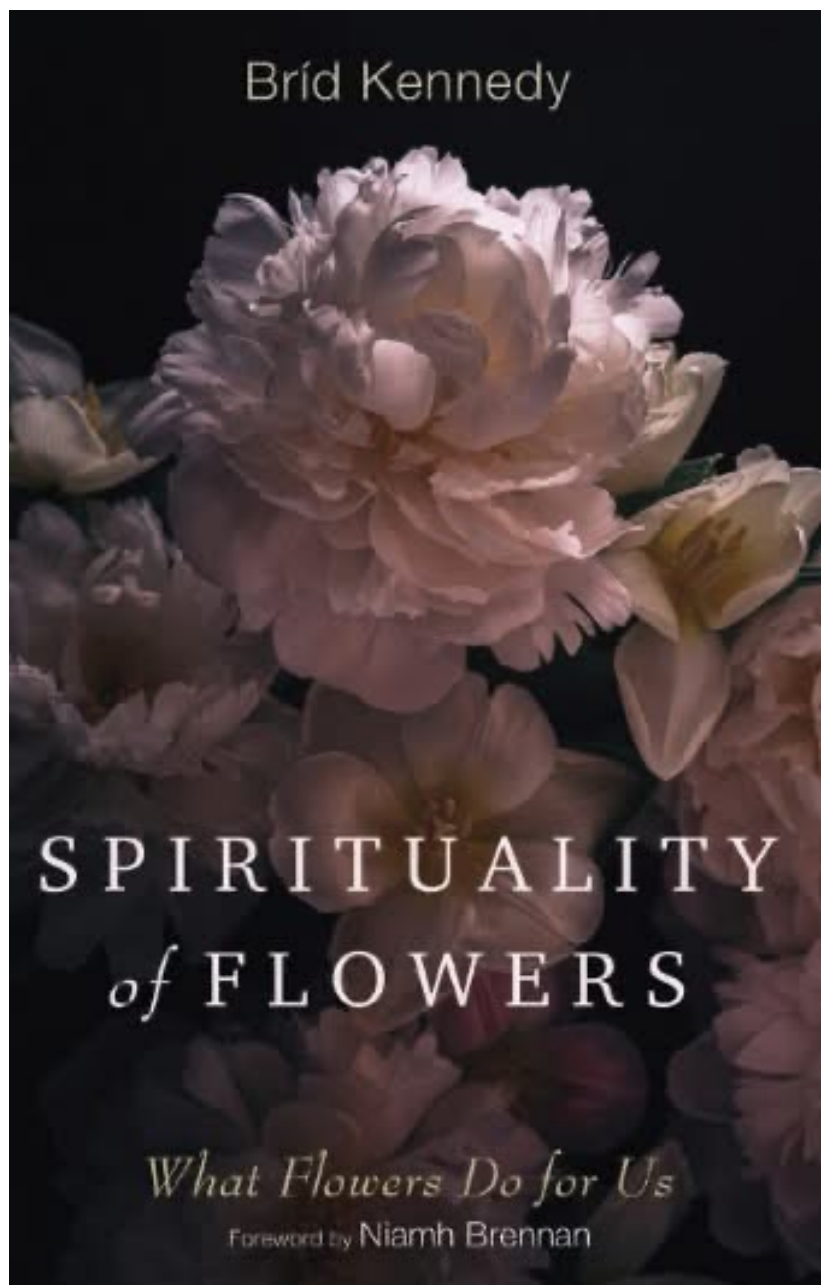
‘Speak Jesus’ is an initiative to connect and reconnect every home in the Diocese of Down and Dromore with a local parish church so that we can speak Jesus into every life.

In 2025 we want to declare hope and peace in God's presence over every community in the diocese.

Bishop David has asked every parish to have a prayer service during the year on or near the Saint's Day for which their church building is named. Churches without a dedication may choose another date that works for them.

Invite to Eco-Congregation Ireland's Spirituality of Flowers

You are invited to the launch of 'Spirituality of Flowers: What Flowers Do For Us' by Bríd Kennedy on Saturday, February 15th,



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11am in the Auditorium, Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. Admission is free and no booking required.

The launch event will celebrate the beauty and transformative power of flowers, offering a chance for guests to hear from the author and engage in thoughtful discussions about the significance of flowers in everyday life. All welcome!

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Artificial Intelligence: Friend or Foe?

Catalyst Evening Course at Belfast School of Theology

Date: Tuesdays - April 29th - May 13th, 2025

Time: 7:30 pm - 9:15 pm

Venue: Belfast School of Theology

Taught By: Prof Stephen Williams

Duration: 3 Weeks

For more information, course structure and to apply for a Catalyst Course:

<https://www.bst.ac.uk/catalyst>

Get In Touch:

Email Us: catalyst@bst.ac.uk

More Info: <https://www.bst.ac.uk>

C of I Confirmation resource

A reminder of the CIYD Confirmation Resource ‘I Believe’ that can be used by those involved in preparing young people for Confirmation.

The resource is 12 sessions long and is based round the Confirmation Service, the Ten Commandments and The Apostles’ Creed.



Topics include ‘Who is God?’, ‘Why we need a Saviour’, ‘The Sacraments’ and ‘Serving God/Serving others’. Each session offers a blend of teaching, games, worship and prayer activities and discussion questions and offers flexibility for sessions to be tailored to different needs, and each participant gets their own handbook.

The resource is available directly from the CIYD office (contact barbara@ciyd.org) or from www.thebookwell.co.uk

KIDS IN THE KINGDOM

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES IN FAITH AND FAMILY

Join us for an inspiring evening with the wonderful Millie Bellew. Drawing from her in-depth research on the religious rights of children, Millie will delve into the importance of empowering children's voices within our faith communities and families.



FEBRUARY 19TH



Church of Ireland
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families

8PM ZOOM

Kids in the Kingdom

**CFM news: Sign up now for our upcoming workshop.
Feb 19th at 8 pm.**

<https://bit.ly/kidsinkingdom>

“We will hear from our own Millie Bellew who will draw from her extensive research into the rights of Children and explore ways that families and churches can empower children's voices as they navigate their faith journeys alongside adults”.

<https://bit.ly/kidsinkingdom>

<https://www.facebook.com/239169528439033/videos/1002585875055250>

Brighter Communities funding

Here is a recap of the recent £1,000 Brighter Communities winners who rounded off 2024

October's winner was Clabby Community Group - CCG. Clabby Community Group, based in Clabby Village, Fermanagh, used the funding to organise a Christmas party for elderly residents from the village and surrounding areas.

November's winner was Share Discovery Village. The funding will support their Unity in Motion project which focuses on bringing local groups together for dance and drama workshops, to help people be creative, make friends, and build confidence.

December's winner was The Link Family and Community Centre. The funding will support their Drop In, a safe and welcoming space for people facing substance dependency. It offers meals, support services, and engaging quizzes to help build connections and expand knowledge.

Congratulations to all the winners!

Apply now for January's fund at <https://ow.ly/eT6u50UImcv>

Perspective

Former Canadian PM's view on claims by US President

Former Canadian PM Stephen Harper: "There is no migrant flow happening from Canada to the United States of any significant numbers... And I'm going to tell you right now, drugs, guns, crime—most of those things flow north, not south."

If there is a problem with border security between the States and Canada, it's not on our side. Between Oct. 2023 and September 2024, roughly 43 lbs of fentanyl was seized passing from Canada to the States (compared to 21,100 lbs at the Mexico border). That's the equivalent of a single suitcase.

...but just two weeks ago, 1,840 LBS of cocaine was seized by the Toronto Police, coming from the States INTO Canada.

The Toronto Police have also found that 85% of crime guns they recover have entered Canada from the States.

What does President Trump intend to do to resolve this? Move the goalposts some more, apparently.

First it was "drugs and illegal migrants are pouring in over the Canadian border!" (they aren't); then it was "we're subsidizing Canada by \$200B/year!" (they aren't), then it was "Canada has been treating us unfairly!" (referring to the

trade deals that HE signed last time he was in office), and now it's "they don't allow U.S. banks into their country!"

First, this is false; as of right now, there are 13 American banks that have branches inside Canada.

Second, here's the true part: it HAS been challenging for American banks to make much headway in Canada, but this is for a significant reason: Canada's tighter financial regulations mean that the way those American banks would LIKE to do business (and do south of the border) are illegal in Canada.

Remember during the financial crisis of 2008, when the American government had to bail out their largest banks or they wouldn't survive? ...Yep, because that's what happened.

Remember during the financial crisis of 2008 when the Canadian government had to bail out OUR banks? ...Nope, because that never happened.

There have been 534 bank failures in the States since 2001. The number of Canadian bank failures in that same time is 0.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

Please recommend to your friends